special readers'-choice issue!

Parents

HOW TO STOP SAYING NO
(AND STILL GET GOOD BEHAVIOR)

8 HABITS FOR HEALTHY KIDS
(START NOW!)

15-MINUTE FITNESS FOR BUSY MOMS

home hacks to simplify your hectic life

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INDOOR GAMES THEY'LL LOVE



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Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids

Help your kids fight colds and flu with these smart tips from Braun®

'Tis the season for colds and flu. And while it's not possible to completely protect your kids, there are things you can do to help them avoid getting sick. Start teaching them these healthy habits to keep them as germ-free as possible.

1. Start healthy to stay healthy

The healthier your child is, the better he or she will be able to fight off germs. Getting enough sleep is one of the best things your kids can do to boost their immune system. Aim for at least 12 hours of sleep for toddlers and 10 hours for school-age children. Encourage your kids to eat a well-balanced diet (try for 1-2 cups of fruit and 1-3 cups of vegetables each day) and to drink plenty of water throughout the day. And don't forget the importance of exercise in maintaining good health—shoot for one hour of physical activity most days of the week.

2. Cover your cough

Instead of teaching your kids to cover their mouths with a tissue or their hands, have them cough or sneeze into the crook of their arm—it keeps germs from getting on their hands, and then spreading all over everything their little hands touch.

3. Maintain moisture

You probably already know that a cool mist humidifier can help provide your child with relief from coughs and congestion, but did you know that homes kept at a proper humidity level are likely to have fewer flu viruses lingering on surfaces such as door handles and counter tops? Recent studies suggest that maintaining an indoor humidity level between 40-60% can reduce the survival of the flu virus on surfaces and in the air.

4. Keep things clean

You can help, too. Get into the habit of regularly wiping down surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, drawer pulls, keyboards, remote controls, and countertops. In the kitchen and the bathroom, replace germ-harboring cloth hand towels with paper towels.

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This is not intended as a substitute for consultation with your doctor. Always seek advice from your doctor if your child appears ill or if you have any questions regarding your child's health.

BRAUN

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Choose the ear thermometer most used by doctors.

When it comes to accurately taking a child's temperature, doctors trust the Braun ThermoScan® ear thermometer. Its patented pre-warmed tip and disposable lens filters ensure precise and hygienic readings every time. And the easy-to-read screen and ergonomic design make it so easy to use. Discover for yourself why the ThermoScan® is the favorite of pediatricians and moms.*

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*Based on survey of pediatricians in the United States and syndicated ear thermometer data.

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* = features you picked!

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ON THE COVER
Gabriella with Jude, 3 years, and Sienna, 6 years. Photograph by Priscilla Gragg. Wardrobe styling by Jenn Bonnett. Hair and makeup by Tricia Turner. On Gabriella: Jeans, Current Elliot. Shoes, New Balance. On Jude: Shirt, Nordstorm. Pants, Crewcuts. On Sienna: Dress and tights, Woven Play.

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Score fun for the whole family with these winning ideas for family game night from Orville Redenbacher's® Gourmet® Popping Corn.

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There's no competition—popcorn is the snack for family night in! Orville Redenbacher's® Movie Theater Butter Microwave Popcorn pops up lighter and fluffier to give you 3 more cups per bag than the next leading brand,* so you won't run out of popcorn just as the game is heating up!

Find more great snack ideas at orville.com.



*Comparing average popped volume by bag (next leading brand 10.5 cups; Orville, 13.5 cups) as well as weight and pop expansion ratios (from kernel to popped flake).
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as you like it

SOME magazines invite celebrity guest editors to curate their content. A few months ago we decided that for this first issue of 2016 we would invite you, our readers, to play editor for a day. *Parents*' executive editor Chandra Turner pulled together a list of stories we thought you would want to read and we served up a survey. This issue is the result. All eight feature stories were chosen by you, including the cover story on how to stop saying "no" (and still raise well-behaved kids). It's on page 28.

Reading the survey results was like seeing your life under a microscope. Or looking in the mirror—turns out we moms have universal concerns. Your favorite idea, from the more than 30 we proposed, was a mom's workout that gets you a better body in less than 20 minutes a day. Hey! I want that too! We're delivering it on page 50. You were also craving ways to make your home run more efficiently. As I write this letter I'm sitting in my kitchen in that quiet moment before the kids wake up. There's laundry in the dryer and a little robotic vacuum cleaner at my feet. That's as close as I get to an automated household at this point. So, like you, I'll be studying "Hack Your Home" (page 55). Thanks for picking a winning group of stories (right down to "Your Toughest Money Dilemmas—Solved," on page 68). I don't think a celebrity would have made the same choices!

Dana

Dana Points
dana@parents.com

the *Parents* team answers

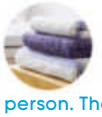
What are you going to throw away this year to de-clutter?



My kids' old schoolwork. I've saved big folders of worksheets and math problems that they're never going to look at again.
—Diane Debrovner, Deputy Editor



Boxes that we never unpacked when we moved four years ago. I can't remember what's inside and they've been stacked under my basement steps for too long!
—Michaela Garibaldi, Managing Editor



I'm tossing old mismatched bed linens and towels so we only have two sets of sheets per bed and two towels per person. They'll be color coded so everyone knows whose is whose—plus it will definitely cut down on laundry.
—Emily Furlani, Art Director



All of my CDs. I don't have anything to play them on!
—Kaitlin Ahern, Parents.com Editor

DANA POINTS: GRACE HUANG. WARDROBE STYLING BY LAURA PRITCHARD. MAKEUP BY ASHLEIGH CIUCCI FOR RAY BROWN REPRESENTS. HAIR STYLING BY DAVID LOPEZ FOR ARTISTS BY NEXT. ON DANA: SHIRT, DIANE VON FURSTENBERG. SKIRT, ZARA. BRACELET, STILL HOUSE. CLUTTER, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHARLES MANN/GETTY IMAGES; CAROLYN BARBER/GETTY IMAGES; DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES; MARK WRAGG/GETTY IMAGES.

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**52 Week Nielsen ScanTrack Data ending 6/27/2015. Leading brand's Complete Multivitamin gummies contain 3 grams of sugar per 2 gummies.

[1]Based on survey of pediatricians who discuss children's supplements with their patients' parents and prefer to recommend Star Wars Complete formula vs. comparable leading brands. All are Pediatrician Preferred except Immune Support Complex.

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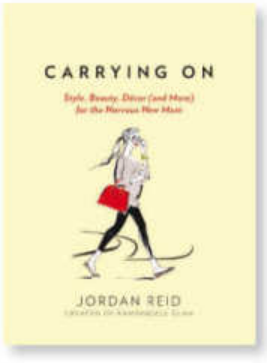
parents 2 parents

MOM MUST-READ



by **Kristen Kemp**
book-club inspiration

Jordan Reid, who runs the popular blog *Ramshackle Glam*, is a trendy, funny, and cost-conscious expert on all things mom. Her new book, *Carrying On: Style, Beauty, Décor (and More) for the Nervous New Mom*, offers tips on pregnancy survival, maternity clothes, relationships, makeup, nursery furniture, house-painting, entertaining, healthy eating (with recipes), and even cute ways to announce the sex of your baby. How does she know all of this stuff? She has two small kids and a husband, and before becoming a writer, she was a Ford model, an actress, and a bartender. With advice on the order of "Please make sure you have a prenup before you go to IKEA," she's easily likable and trustworthy.





Here's hoping you stay awake till midnight!

PULSE

New Year's Resolutions: The Reality

As the seconds tick closer to midnight, those "new year, new you" expectations can change. Oh well, you started off strong.

7:00 P.M.

- Go to the gym and run 3 miles every day.
- Make school lunches from scratch.
- Get the kids into bed, with the lights out, by 7:30 p.m.
- Limit checking Facebook and Instagram to lunch breaks only.

9:30 P.M.

- Walk a mile every other day.
- Include a fruit with the store-bought squeeze pouch in the lunch box.
- Get kids in pajamas and at least partially clean by 7:30 p.m.
- Limit social media to lunch breaks and documenting every-other-day walks.

11:59 P.M.

- Leave the house every day.
- Limit late-night eating of squeeze pouches meant for lunch boxes.
- Have kids somewhere on property and still breathing by 7:30 p.m.
- Don't Instagram while pushing child in swing one-handed.

—Una LaMarche

IT'S COME TO THIS Some elementary schools in Pulaski County Special School District, in Arkansas, ask parents to serve two

KRISTEN KEMP: COURTESY OF JOHAN SVENSON. NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: SVETIKD/GETTY IMAGES.

FANDOM METER
Padawan
Jedi Knight
Jedi Master

LOVE!

The Force Awakens, Indeed!

Is there a Star Wars freak in your house (um, maybe you)? Depending on the level of fandom, you might consider these new products inspired by the latest film (in theaters December 18):



Voice-activated Legendary Yoda by Spin Master reacts to your questions about the dark side. Teach you how to use the Force, he will. *6 years+, $180; walmart.com*



Control the app-enabled Droid, BB-8 by Sphero, with a smartphone or tablet; create personalized holographic messages à la "Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope." *8 years+, $150; store.sphero.com*



Build the First Order Special Forces TIE fighter, then take on the Resistance. *Ages 8 years+, $70; shop.lego.com*



This 4-foot 9-inch Chewie Star Wars Sleeping Bag will be the envy at any kids' sleepover or will turn a twin bed into a furry friend. *26" by 57", $199; potterybarnkids.com*



The Kylo Ren Lightsaber, while not literally fiery like the one in the movie, makes the requisite sounds. *3 years+, $30; disneystore.com*



If R2-D2 doesn't exactly hold all your secrets, the hard-shell suitcase can at least hold all you need for a trip far, far away. *$120 to $400; JCP.com*
—Jessica Hartshorn



SITTER-WORTHY

Sisters Rated R, December 18

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE When two sisters (Tina Fey and Amy Poehler) return home to learn their parents are selling the house they grew up in, they decide to throw one last party to relive their high-school glory days. **WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT** *Sisters* provides the comic relief you need in the middle of a family-filled holiday season. With the help of *SNL* writer Paula Pell and *Pitch Perfect* director Jason Moore, the comedy queens don't disappoint.

hours of volunteer service during school if their child receives more than five unexcused tardies. | California drivers are

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LOL

Cat or Toddler: What's the Diff?

- They never play with toys we buy them, preferring the wrapping paper, box, and string.
- They go from calm to sad to manic hyperactivity in the blink of an eye.
- They'll let us cuddle when they're in the mood, but within seconds they wiggle right out of our arms.
- They wake up randomly in the middle of the night, energized, crazy-eyed, and ready to play.
- They take closed doors as a personal insult. If we try to shut them out, we'll still spot their tiny paws poking underneath.
- We have no idea what they're always so mad about. And we have a feeling they don't have a clue either.
- As soon as we buy an industrial-size container of their favorite food, they won't touch it. Ever again.
- They prevent us from having nice furniture. And clean floors.
- They're the smallest creatures, but they take up the whole bed.
- They think we're their servants. And let's be real … we totally are.
- No matter how insane it is to live with them, as soon as they curl up in our arms we melt. —Sabrina James



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using baby dummies to save commute time by driving in highway car-pool lanes.

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kids.

KEEP THEM HEALTHY AND HAPPY



SYLVIA BORS/GETTY IMAGES.

snowman 2.0 This winter, take snowman-building to new heights—and widths: **1.** Supersize your frozen friend by using an inverted trash can as a base. **2.** Give Frosty a twist by accessorizing him with goofy items from family members' closets, like an old tutu or a sombrero. **3.** Mist him with food coloring–and-water mixtures in various hues to give him some tie-dye flair. He'll be the star of the snow!

42%

The amount of all video games that contain images of tobacco, a new study found. Only 8% of the games had a warning about the tobacco-related content.



"May I go?" The answer should usually be "yes."

Accidents Happen

You may expect your school-age kid to be able to "hold it," but here's the real deal: Nearly one-quarter of 5-year-olds struggle with some sort of incontinence, sometimes at school, says Steve Hodges, M.D., a pediatric-urology specialist at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Part of the problem, according to a recent survey of more than 4,000 kindergarten-through-fifth-grade teachers, is that while 80 percent offer kids unlimited access to water during class time, nearly 90 percent admit to discouraging them from using the restroom during teaching.

Children should pee every two or three hours or whenever they feel the urge, says Dr. Hodges. Holding it is dangerous, he notes, as it could harm their bladder or rectum and could cause recurrent urinary-tract infections in girls. If you're worried about your school's policies, direct your district to Dr. Hodges's guides for teachers and school nurses, free at bedwettingandaccidents.com.



Dealing With Trauma

In *Alex and the Scary Things*, an alligator explains how different parts of his personality come out when he's scared or angry, teaching coping mechanisms to kids who've experienced trauma, such as family upheaval or a car accident. The book was written by Melissa Moses, an assistant psychologist at McLean Hospital, in Belmont, Massachusetts. *4 years+, $18*



THE POWER OF PARENTS

Aid for Families in the NICU

Amanda Hedin's pregnancy was rough from the start, despite her best efforts to stay healthy. After an exhausting 28 weeks, her twin girls, Reagan and Eden, were delivered via emergency C-section. Hedin and her husband, Scott, then spent eight months in the NICU—Reagan eventually got better, but Eden died when she was 7 months old. After the tragic ordeal, the Blaine, Minnesota, parents started Eden's Garden (edensgardenmn.org) to provide resources and support for other families with children in the NICU. "There are expenses to worry about beyond medical bills—whether it's gas money, grabbing a quick bite to eat, or arranging for someone to walk your dog or clean your house," Hedin says. After launching in 2013, the organization has quickly grown and is on track to help roughly 60 families in and around Minnesota this year. Says Hedin: "We can help others, even while we're still grieving."

✱ *Parents* donated $500 to Eden's Garden. To nominate your organization or community-service project and to be considered for a donation, e-mail advocacy@parents.com.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ISTOCKPHOTO; COURTESY OF EYDIE NELSON PHOTOGRAPHY; PETER ARDITO.

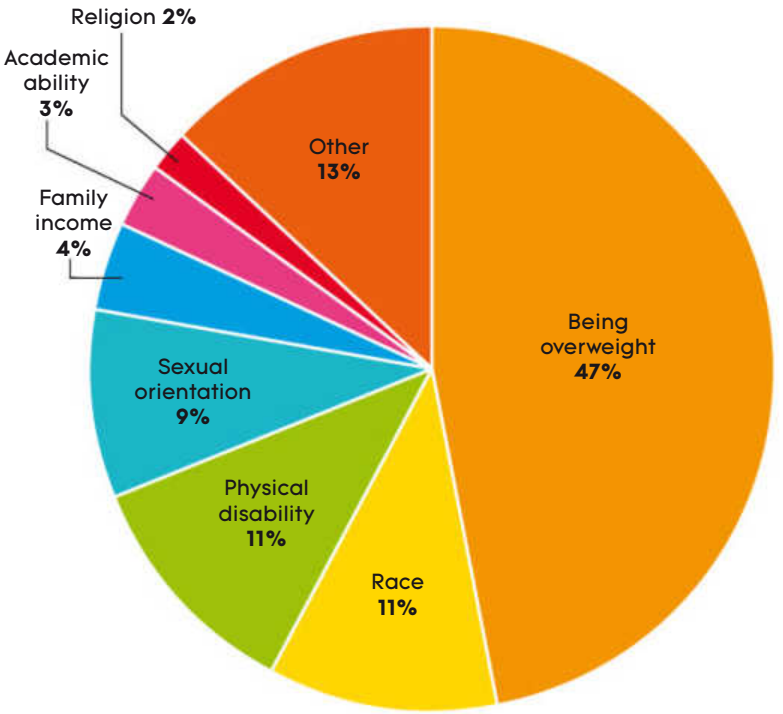
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daily moisturizer
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The #1 Reason Kids Are Bullied

It's being "fat," found a new survey of parents. Bullying about body size is vastly more common, in fact, than kids being teased about physical disabilities, their family's income, or their sexual preference (see chart below).

"Parents can be powerful advocates by talking to principals and teachers to make sure this issue is on their radar," says study author Rebecca Puhl, Ph.D., deputy director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut in Hartford. You may also want to think about your own attitude about body size—weight stigma can happen at home, too, with parents fat-talking themselves or making an issue of others' size, notes Dr. Puhl.



80%

The percentage of kids in the U.S. with diagnosable anxiety who do not receive any treatment, according to the Child Mind Institute.

Sickweather
Attention, germophobes! There's now an app that scans social media ("Oh no, my son has chicken pox!") to estimate how "sick" an area is. Alerts can be sent to your phone when an illness is going around. *Free, iOS and Android; sickweather.com*



Happy Brushing
Make bedtime prep more fun with the Violife Rockee Toothbrush. It wobbles and spins but always stays upright, keeping the toothpaste off the counter while entertaining your little one. *$15; violife.com*

New Autism Screening

Even though signs of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can show up in babies as young as 12 months, diagnosis is often delayed until close to age 4. But researchers have developed a new ten-minute interactive screening test for at-risk toddlers that may be available nationwide within the next two years. Called RITA-T, it tends to be more accurate at identifying autism than other evaluations. The test can be used as early as 12 months for kids who have been identified as being at risk for ASD by other methods, who have developmental delays, or who have a sibling with autism. You can get more info at umassmed.edu/AutismRITA-T.

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Indications

Tamiflu is a prescription medicine used to treat the flu (influenza) in people 2 weeks of age and older who have had flu symptoms for no more than 2 days. Tamiflu can also reduce the chance of getting the flu in people 1 year and older. Tamiflu does not prevent bacterial infections that may happen with the flu. **Tamiflu is not a substitute for an annual flu vaccination.** Do not take Tamiflu if you are allergic to oseltamivir phosphate or any of the ingredients in Tamiflu.

Important Safety Information

If you have an allergic reaction or a severe rash with Tamiflu, stop taking it and contact your doctor right away. This may be very serious. People with the flu, particularly children and adolescents, may be at an increased risk of seizure, confusion, or abnormal behavior early during their illness. Let your doctor know if you are pregnant, nursing, have heart problems, breathing problems, a

What is Tamiflu?

TAMIFLU is a prescription medicine used to treat the flu (influenza) in people 2 weeks of age and older who have had flu symptoms for no more than 2 days. TAMIFLU may also prevent the flu in people who are 1 year of age and older.

It is not known if Tamiflu is:

- effective in people who start treatment after 2 days of developing flu symptoms
- effective for the treatment of the flu in people with long-time (chronic) heart problems or breathing problems
- effective in treating or preventing flu in people with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised)
- safe and effective for treating flu in children less than 2 weeks of age or preventing the flu in children less than 1 year of age

Tamiflu does not treat or prevent illness that is caused by infections other than the flu virus, nor prevent bacterial infections that may happen with the flu.

Tamiflu does not take the place of receiving a flu vaccination. Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should receive an annual flu vaccination.

Who should not take Tamiflu?

Do not take Tamiflu if you are allergic to oseltamivir phosphate or any ingredient in Tamiflu.

Before you take Tamiflu, tell your healthcare provider if you:

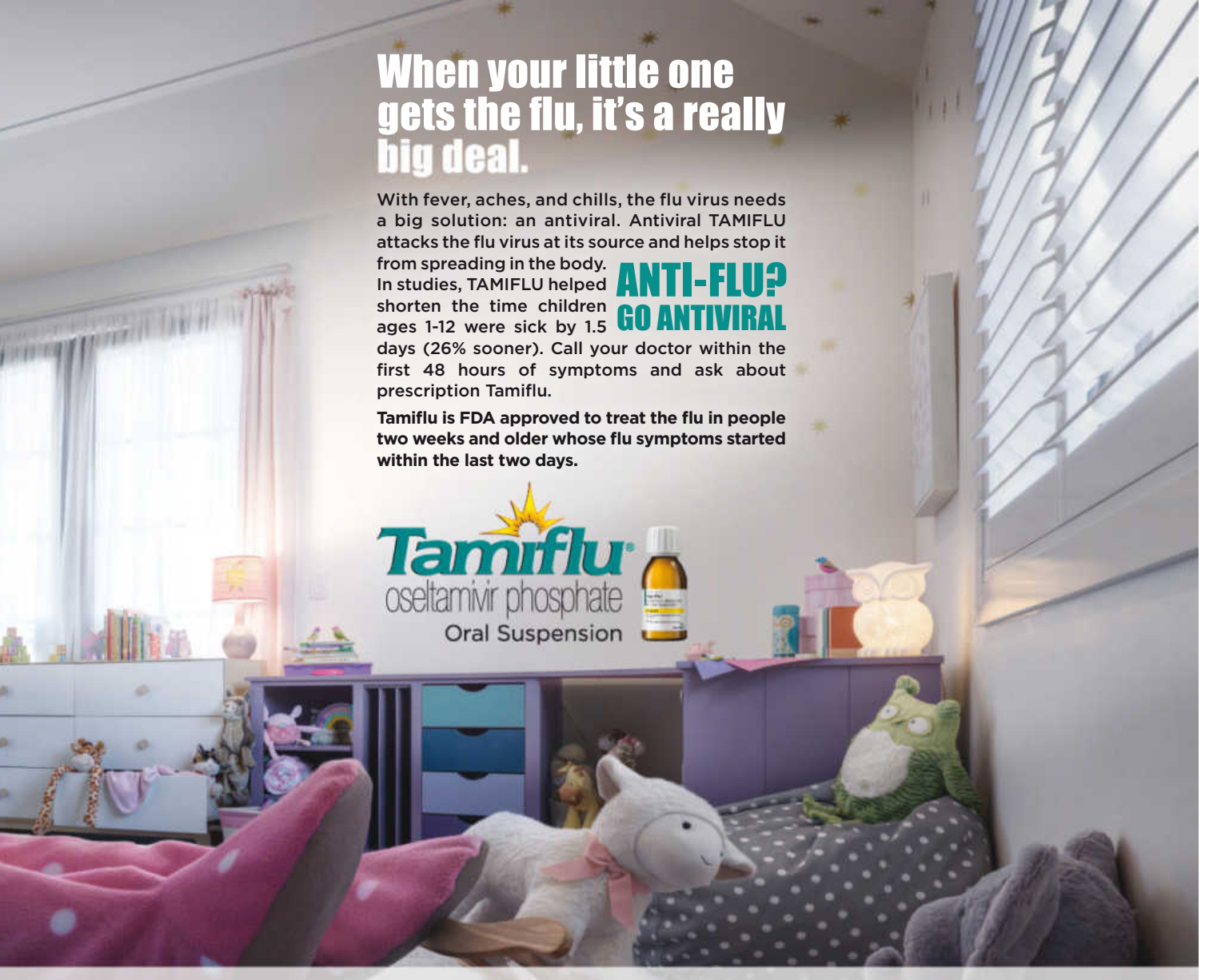
- have problems swallowing Tamiflu capsules
- have kidney problems or any other medical conditions
- have a history of fructose (fruit sugar) intolerance, because Tamiflu contains sorbitol that may cause upset stomach and diarrhea in people who are fructose intolerant
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Tamiflu will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Tamiflu passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take Tamiflu while you are breastfeeding

Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you take, including prescription or over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Keep a list of medicines you take to show your healthcare provider when you get a new medicine.

How should I take Tamiflu?

- Take Tamiflu exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to. Tamiflu can be taken with food or without



weakened immune system (immunocompromised), kidney problems or other medical conditions, as Tamiflu may not be right for you. Also tell your doctor about any medications you are taking or if you've received a nasal-spray flu vaccine in the past two weeks. The most common side effects are mild to moderate nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain.

Please see the Tamiflu full Prescription Information for complete important safety information.

You are encouraged to report side effects to Genentech by calling 1-888-835-2555 or to the FDA by visiting www.fda.gov/medwatch or calling 1-800-FDA-1088.

Learn more about Tamiflu Visit www.Tamiflu.com.

TAM/090215/0063

food. There is less chance of stomach upset if you take it with food

- If you miss a dose of Tamiflu, take it as soon as you remember. If it is 2 hours or less before your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Take your next dose of Tamiflu at your scheduled time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time

- If Tamiflu for oral suspension is not available or you cannot swallow Tamiflu capsules, your healthcare provider may instruct you to open Tamiflu capsules and mix the capsules' contents with sweetened liquids such as chocolate syrup (regular or sugar-free), corn syrup, caramel topping, or light brown sugar (dissolved in water)

- **If your healthcare provider has instructed you to take Tamiflu oral suspension or open your Tamiflu capsules, read the detailed Instructions for Use in the full prescribing information.**

Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions.

What are the possible side effects of Tamiflu?

Tamiflu may cause serious side effects, including **serious skin and allergic reactions**.

Stop taking Tamiflu and get medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms:

- skin rash or hives
- blistering or peeling skin
- blisters or sores in your mouth
- itching
- swelling of your face, eyes, lips, tongue, or throat
- trouble breathing
- chest pain or tightness

- **Change in behavior.** People, especially children, who have the flu can develop nervous system problems and abnormal behavior that can lead to death. While taking Tamiflu, tell your healthcare provider right away if you or your child have confusion, speech problems, shaky movements, seizures, or start hearing voices or seeing things that are not really there (hallucinations).

The most common side effects of Tamiflu when treating the flu include nausea and vomiting. When preventing the flu they include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach (abdomen) pain.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away. These are not all of the possible side effects of Tamiflu.

Keep Tamiflu and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Tamiflu.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the patient information leaflet. Do not use Tamiflu for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Tamiflu to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. If you want more information, talk with your healthcare provider.

You are encouraged to report side effects to Genentech by calling 1-888-835-2555 or to the FDA by visiting www.fda.gov/medwatch or calling 1-800-FDA-1088.

For more information, go to www.tamiflu.com.

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8 simple rules for raising a healthy kid

A doctor mom reveals the easiest ways to pull it off. by **WENDY HUNTER, M.D.**



LETTERING BY JOEL HOLLAND. SET STYLING BY JENN EVERETT. WARDROBE STYLING BY ANNIE CARUSO. HAIRSTYLING BY JUNYA NAKASHIMA FOR ENNIS INC. MAKEUP BY JEANETTE JAVORE FOR ENNIS INC.

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I have two children, ages 8 and 13, so I know what it's like to feel bombarded by advice on keeping kids healthy. I'm also an emergency-room pediatrician and I have to keep up on the latest medical research. I've found that the most basic rules can go a long way. (My kids haven't had a sick day from school in years!) So I've chosen eight (in no particular order) that have the greatest impact on kids' health. I bet you're doing some of them already.

1 Offer lots of fruits and vegetables.

Eating five servings every day is good for your heart and helps protect against cancer and prevent obesity. Unfortunately, kids facing, say, broccoli won't be particularly persuaded by a reference to the scientific literature. They often need to be *taught* to like fruits and veggies.

When kids reject a food, it's often due to unfamiliarity, not true dislike. So offer the same food many times. While babies eagerly try new foods, older kids may need as many as 15 tries before they'll like or tolerate them.

2 Teach hand-washing.

When I became a pediatrician, I was always sick. I assumed that exposure to kids' illnesses was part of the job. Although I washed my hands frequently, I eventually realized that I was inadvertently transferring germs from my computer keyboard to my mouth when I snacked between seeing patients. I stopped eating at my computer and I haven't had a stomach virus since!

A group of researchers in London called the International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene (IFH) tracked germ transmission through homes and found that people's hands are the number-one source for spreading infection. We may blame our pets, sneezing kids, and dirty shoes, but they're not the real cause.

We transfer germs from our hands into our body when we touch our eyes, mouth, or nose. And young kids touch their face a lot: One study found that it's as often as 50 times an hour. The goal, then, is to reduce the number of germs on their hands. Certainly, door handles and toys are germ reservoirs, so wipe those down frequently. Other hot spots are the bathroom and the kitchen, which the IFH found to contain some of the most contaminated surfaces in the home.

3 Vaccinate on time.

Children get up to 24 shots by age 2. With that number, it's no wonder some parents may be tempted to delay certain vaccines. I actually postponed my daughter's HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine because we were too busy to schedule visits for all three shots, and protecting her from an adult disease when she was in 7th grade just didn't seem that critical. But after researching my decision, I was reminded that the vaccine schedule is meticulously designed to give immunizations when they are most effective. Babies and toddlers need to get their vaccines in the critical window that begins when their immune system is developed enough to respond but before they are at highest risk from the most dangerous diseases. Deviating from the schedule won't guarantee effectiveness, and delays may also contribute to more side effects. For example, measles-containing vaccines are twice as likely to cause a febrile seizure when given late, shows research from University of Washington in Seattle. Needless to say, we got my daughter back on schedule, and she finished her HPV series before she turned 13.

4 Brush teeth with fluoride.

Even mild tooth decay can affect kids' health by causing pain, poor eating, and interrupted sleep. In one extreme case, I had an 11-year-old patient who spent a week in the hospital for a dental infection. Fortunately, simply brushing protects teeth—if you use fluoride. That's what builds and maintains the protective enamel on teeth. They need to "bathe" in fluoride for its magic to work. So as soon as your child has teeth, brush them with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day. So-called "training" toothpaste doesn't contain fluoride.

5 Enforce a regular bedtime (starting in toddlerhood).

I have to confess, I've often delayed my kids' bedtime just to spend a little more time with them. But I'm not doing them any favors. Children who don't get enough sleep can become hyperactive, and their school performance suffers, according to a *Pediatrics* study. Sleep deprivation in kids may also impact the hormone leptin, which signals us to stop eating, and kids who don't get enough zzz's may be more likely to be overweight or obese than those who do.

Make sure your child is going to bed early enough too. Research found that kids who regularly turned in after 9 P.M. also displayed more behavior problems. The good news is that the behavioral consequences of poor sleep are reversible once a kid switches to a regular, appropriate bedtime, no matter how old he is.

Kids need far more sleep than many parents realize. Toddlers need 11 to 14 hours (including naps), preschoolers need ten to 13 hours,

THAT MOMENT.

THAT ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME

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and after kindergarten, kids need nine to 11 hours. So set a regular bedtime routine and stick to it. If you read a book, cuddle, and tuck them in at roughly the same time each night (before 9 P.M.!), kids will find their natural rhythm and sleep the right number of hours.

6 Insist on a helmet. We keep a dented helmet on a shelf in our pediatric E.R. with a note from a 13-year-old bike rider that reads, "This helmet saved my life when my head dented the hood of a car." It's a reminder that wearing a helmet can prevent serious injuries—yet less than half of kids wear one, and more than a third wear them incorrectly, according to Safe Kids Worldwide.

Your attitude has the greatest influence on your kids' helmet use. So insist that your children wear helmets when they ride anything with wheels—and always wear one yourself. Kids often complain that a helmet is uncomfortable. Here's how to know it fits properly: It should rest two-fingers' width above the eyebrows and not slide around. Tighten the chin strap until it's snug; no more than one finger should fit under the strap. When your child opens her mouth wide, the helmet should pull down on her head. Adjust it so that the left and right straps form a Y below her ears.

7 Apply sunscreen, all year long. While sun exposure wreaks havoc on skin at any age, sunburn during childhood is particularly risky. The earlier in a child's life that skin cells become damaged, the greater his chance of developing skin cancer over his lifetime. Kids are especially sensitive to the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation because their skin has a thinner outer protective layer than an adult's does.

For kids over 6 months, apply sunscreen any time they're exposed to the sun. (Keep younger babies out of direct sunlight altogether.) In addition to sunscreen, protect kids with clothes that minimize exposure, a wide-brimmed hat, UV-protective sunglasses, and by keeping them in the shade as much as possible.

8 Use safety straps. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that three out of four kids aren't restrained properly in vehicles. Make sure you carefully follow the instructions on your child's car seat, booster seat, or seat belt so he is safe.



Most baby gear these days also comes with safety straps to prevent falls (the leading cause of nonfatal injury among all kids, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Unfortunately, they're not always used correctly either: On average, more than 9,400 children are treated each year for an injury associated with a high chair or a booster seat, and 93 percent of those injuries involve a fall, says Safe Kids Worldwide. Of those kids who fall, two thirds had been climbing or standing in the chair. Babies are especially prone to falls because their disproportionately large head makes them top-heavy.

It's true you can't stop kids from climbing, but you can keep yours safe and prevent your own anguish by always using safety belts when they're available.

JGI/GETTY IMAGES.

BREASTFEED, IF YOU CAN



Not every mother is able to nurse. I myself couldn't quite keep up with pumping while at work and supplemented with formula. I knew that while breastfeeding exclusively is ideal, even a small amount of breast milk would benefit my baby. For one thing, it offers variety: Unlike formula, the flavor and calorie content of breast milk changes from feeding to feeding so a baby's palate develops with exposure to a variety of new tastes. Breast milk also contains sugars called human milk oligosaccharides that protect against infection and create a healthy intestinal environment for good bacteria. This helps digestion when kids start eating solids. And breastfed babies get sick less often than their formula-fed friends and are actually less ill when they do.



ROAD TRIPS with baby

Even though you may be confident that you've done everything right, it's in your best interest to visit a car seat inspection station.

To find one, go to **http://www.seatcheck.org/** and search by ZIP code or go to the NHTSA website for helpful tips on installing your car seat.

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how to stop saying NO

You're as tired of the word as your kids are of hearing it. Follow a parenting expert's strategies for getting kids to behave by saying "yes" more often. Then sit back and enjoy the positive results. by **NARIA HALLIWELL**

AT THE END of a busy weekend of soccer practice, birthday parties, and grocery shopping, we have family friends over for dinner. The kids are, simply put, crazy: running around, pulling toys out of every basket, and jumping from couch to chair and back again. My three daughters come to me every two minutes with a different request. "No," I say, barely listening.

But then my 8-year-old makes a statement that does catch my attention. "My mom says 'no' all the time," she tells her pal. Hearing my daughter describe me as a 24/7 "no" mom was surprising—and hurtful.

I have to admit I do resort to the reflexive *no,* particularly during stressful times of day, like the morning rush to get my oldest out the door for school and the evening crunch around bedtime. Still, I don't want my girls to think I'm not listening or considering their needs and requests. I want them to know they have a voice, a say in our family.

So in an attempt to address my "no-ness," I decided to reach out to Amy McCready, the founder of PositiveParentingSolutions.com, a training program for parents, and the author of *The "Me, Me, Me" Epidemic: A Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Capable, Grateful Kids in an Over-Entitled World*. When we spoke, I explained that I have good, generally well-behaved girls: Talia, age 8, Sofie, 5, and Sasha, 2. I'm not struggling with any major issues with my kids, just the normal everyday stuff. Still, I confess that sometimes I can't handle all their requests, and saying "no" works. "Simply saying 'no' or barking orders about

photographs by **PRISCILLA GRAGG**


"Nuh-uh. Nope. Hey,
are you guys
even listening to me?"

what kids should be doing can be expedient in the moment," McCready says. "However, it doesn't foster their sense of capability or independence and can make the situation ripe for power struggles." If I want to achieve the goal of being more positive, I'd have to give more power and responsibility over to my daughters. Positive discipline doesn't mean that kids always get their way or that you say "yes" to everything. McCready explains, "It means giving kids opportunities to have some age-appropriate control over their own world, within the firm and loving boundaries you feel comfortable with."

Sounds good, but how? McCready offered me three key strategies to use when I struggle with "no" most.



Get good behavior without always playing the naysayer.

INSTEAD OF "NO," SAY ...

"You're really growing up! From now on, I'm going to let you be responsible for certain things."

Talia's school bus comes at 7:20 A.M., which is just too early for our family. I was always thankful my children didn't rise with the sun, but the flip side is that getting Talia motivated in the morning is difficult. I'm badgering her from the minute I wake her to the moment she's out the door: to get dressed, eat, put on her shoes. Anything she requests is met with a swift negative—I barely even have time to talk to her, as I'm so busy just trying to get her ready.

However, according to McCready, children as young as 4 or 5 can learn to get up on their own and manage their morning routine, with a little pregame planning with your help (for example, setting an alarm clock with her, and putting cups, bowls, and cereal in a low cabinet where she can reach them in the morning). Talia is 8½, and I'm still waking her. "Right now, the morning is your problem," McCready explains. "You need to make it Talia's problem by turning over the responsibility." McCready believes we don't give our kids enough legitimate control over their own lives. Parents spend so much time ordering, correcting, and fixing, that children don't feel in control. They need to feel empowered by making their own choices.

McCready suggests we get Talia a digital watch with a multiple-alarm setting (an alarm clock or iPod can do the job too) and let Talia decide what time she wants to get up. She's to set three alarms: one to wake, one to be dressed and downstairs, and a final alarm to be out the door. At McCready's urging, I present our new routine to Talia in a positive light, as a privilege she's earned. "You're old enough to get yourself up, dressed, and downstairs," I tell Talia. "You've proven to me how responsible you can be, so we're going to get you your own special watch. Now, you're in charge of your morning." Talia beams with pride and excitement. Over the weekend, together we buy the watch and write out her new schedule.

On Monday morning, to my astonishment, Talia wakes up on her own, dresses herself, eats her breakfast, gets her things together, and is out the door—all on time. Because she's responsible for making it all happen, it does—and

we even have time to chat. The morning, like the others that follow, is peaceful, pleasant, and organized. It's amazing that such an easy fix created such a dramatic positive change. Now, instead of my nudging Talia through the morning routine, the alarm reminds her when to get ready—and she takes pride in feeling so capable. And McCready points out that the alarm system can be used for other issues too: bedtime, homework, making difficult transitions, and more.

INSTEAD OF "NO," SAY ...

"When you finish X, you may enjoy Y."

As is the case in every household I know with kids, no two weekdays look the same. But every day—at some point—I allow my girls to watch one TV show. It's the "some point" that's causing the problem. My kindergartner, Sofie, has difficulty figuring out when she's going to be allowed her precious TV time. Every day, the minute we walk into the house—whether it's 2 P.M. or 5:30 P.M. —she wants to know "When can I watch TV?" And I can't stand the daily barrage of begging, whining, and pleading that inevitably leads me to say "no" over and over again.

McCready suggests I institute a "when/then" strategy: When all the "must-do" activities are finished (homework, instrument practice, cleanup), then Sofie can have TV time. Because Sofie's TV time also depends in part on her siblings' commitments, I lay out the full schedule for the day for her. "Talia has theater today, so when we get home from dropping her off, you and Sasha need to clean up the playroom, and then—yes—you can have a TV show."

Once Sofie has the information for the day, she doesn't feel insecure about whether TV is going to happen or not. She's no longer constantly checking in with me because she now knows exactly what needs to happen, and I find I'm saying "yes" a lot more. I'm successfully using when/then at other tricky times of day, too, like bedtime (when you brush your teeth, then we can read books until lights-out) and mealtime (when the dinner plates are cleared, then we'll serve dessert).

when do *you* say yes?

On Facebook you shared the small things you can't help but agree to.

- "Pillow-fort night, with every pillow, blanket, stuffed animal, and comforter in the house." *Winter Kelty*
- "Letting my 19-month-old choose her own outfit. It may clash and include a tiara, but hey, a girl has to accessorize!" *Ana Long*
- "Bubbles, even indoors." *Morgan Dufty*
- "My 8-year-old's strip of pink hair." *Melanie Collicott-Nemacheck*
- "Mud puddles, always." *Fiore Zuzzori*
- "Baths, no matter what time of day. Sometimes you just need a bath to feel good." *Rachel Sears*
- "Writing in shaving cream on the shower door." *Angie Robins Lochman*
- "Indoor camping, complete with tent and s'mores!" *Amber Whitworth*
- "Letting my 4-year-old polish my nails." *Christy Ober Betlan*
- "Breakfast in bed, just because!" *Danielle Barton*

—Riyana Straetker

INSTEAD OF "NO," SAY ...

"Let's talk about it."

Third grade is an exciting time at our school: Kids are allowed to walk home alone. When Talia first asked me if she could, my gut said "no." I was overwhelmed by the risks: School is more than a mile away, there are two busy intersections, what if she gets lost or hurt, what if a stranger approaches her? It felt much easier to keep her safe and close.

But instead of giving in to my primal maternal instinct, I followed McCready's advice and said, "Hmm, let's talk about that." McCready provided me with three key questions to ask. One: "Why is that important to you?" (Talia explained that everyone who walks says it's fun, and she wanted some freedom). Two: "If I say 'yes' to your request, what are some important things that you need to remember to do?" (We sat down together with a map, going over the route and pointing out crossing guards and sidewalks). Three: "What can I do to help you be most successful?" (Talia's answer was simple: "Trust me.") Once you know your child has covered all the bases, McCready instructs, express confidence in her and let it happen.

On the first day my husband and I allowed Talia to walk home alone, I admit that I hid behind a tree in my yard until I saw her round the corner. Relieved, I ran inside so she wouldn't catch me spying and gave her a hug when she proudly walked through the door. Though I mourned the loss of a piece of her childhood, I knew I'd made the right decision.

McCready suggests saving the "re-frame" for the important requests. "Sometimes we don't have the time or luxury to consider every request and have to say 'no.' But it's crucial to let your kids know that you're taking their needs and desires into account and really considering them." Then they, too, are more likely to feel they're being heard.

brake for a bite!

leader of the snack

Fruits and veggies are the healthiest foods to give your child in between meals. Find out how to make them fun.

by **CARLA CHRISTIAN, R.D.N.**



photographs by **DANE TASHIMA**



Fruity English Muffins
Split a whole-grain English muffin. Top with 2 Tbs. ricotta cheese and sprinkle on pomegranate seeds. Drizzle with 1 tsp. honey.

Nutty Pears
Slice a pear into wedges. Spread 1 tsp. peanut butter on the bottom half of each wedge and dip into granola and dried fruit.

Caprese Kabobs
Skewer cherry or grape tomatoes, mini pieces of romaine lettuce, basil, and mini mozzarella balls. Cut off pointy ends.

Roasted Green Peas
Defrost 2 cups frozen green peas; place on a baking sheet. Toss with 2 tsp. olive oil and ¼ tsp. salt. Roast in a 350°F oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until browned and crisp. Let cool completely. Store covered for up to a week.

Go to **parents.com/healthy-snack** to see the full nutrition info.



Have leftover chips? Stow them in an airtight container for up to 24 hours.

Ants on a Log, 3 New Ways

Fill celery stalks with the following:

- Guacamole; top with black beans, corn kernels, or both.
- Soft cheese; top with chickpeas.
- Red-pepper hummus; top with sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds.

Rainbow Chips

Preheat oven to 375°F. Peel and thinly slice beets, parsnips, and celery root. Remove excess liquid from beets with paper towels; let stand for 15 minutes. Toss with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Bake on a cookie sheet in a single layer for these times: Beets (10 minutes; remove and let stand for 5 minutes; bake 8 to 10 minutes more), celery root (28 minutes), and parsnips (23 minutes). Cool parsnips and celery root on sheet, beets on paper towels.

Yogurt-Covered Strawberries

Dip berries into Greek yogurt. Place on a wax-paper–lined baking sheet; freeze 1½ hours. Thaw a bit, then serve.

Lovely Clementines

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Veggie Vases
Slice a bit off the bottom and top of multicolored grape tomatoes. Plant a broccoli or cauliflower floret inside.

Fruit & Veggie Chutney
Boil 1 cup veggie broth. Add 1½ cups peeled and chopped sweet potatoes; simmer 5 minutes. Stir in 1 peeled and chopped apple, ½ cup fresh or dried chopped figs, 1 Tbs. brown sugar, and ¼ tsp. cinnamon. Simmer, covered, for 12 minutes or until sweet potatoes are tender. Remove lid and simmer 2 minutes more until slightly thickened. Spread on whole-grain crackers.

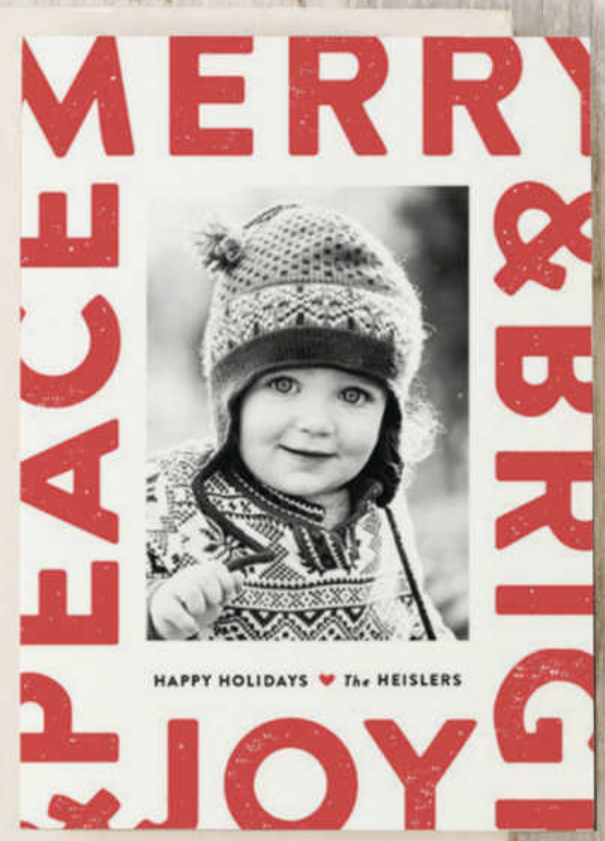
Cucumber Cups
Cut a cucumber into ½-in. slices, then scoop out the inside to make mini cups. Fill with chicken salad, tuna salad, or egg salad.

Waffle-Iron Apples
Core an apple; slice into ¼-in.-thick pieces. Brush both sides with a little melted butter. Preheat a waffle iron on low-heat setting. Place 2 apple slices on grid, close lid, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until lightly browned. Repeat with remaining apple slices.

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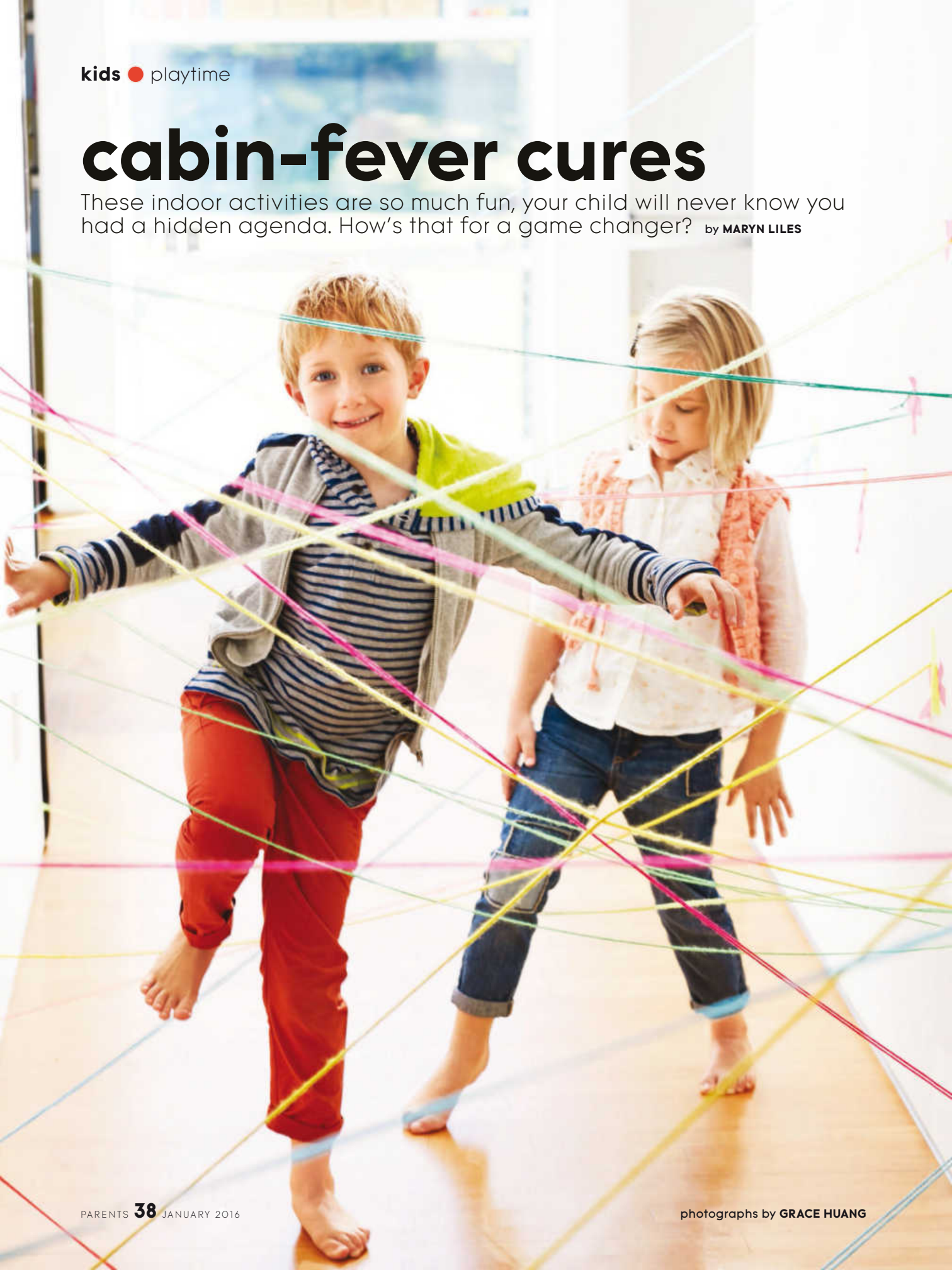
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"Branch Toss" by Alethea and Ruth



cabin-fever cures

These indoor activities are so much fun, your child will never know you had a hidden agenda. How's that for a game changer? by **MARYN LILES**



photographs by **GRACE HUANG**



Burn off some extra energy.

GAME Yarn Laser Maze Treasure Heist
AGE 3 years+
OBJECTIVE See if your child can get to the "treasure" on the other side of a hallway maze.
HOW IT WORKS Unwind a skein of yarn and tape it in a zigzag pattern from wall to wall down the length of your hallway. Place the treasure—a favorite toy or a special treat—just beyond the maze's edge. See if your child can steal it without touching the yarn "laser beams." If your kid touches them, he has to start over.

games that require only pen and paper

- **Blind Self-Portrait** Have each family member draw themselves—but with their eyes closed! Put all the pictures in the center and see if you can guess who's who.
- **Line Drawings** Draw a random line or basic shape on a piece of paper. Then challenge your child to turn that line or shape into a drawing of ... anything! For example, a circle could become a Ferris wheel, a scoop of ice cream on top of a cone, or a puppy's head.
- **EOT-CAT-CIT** The reverse of tic-tac-toe. The player who gets three in a row loses.



Buy yourself a little peace and quiet.

GAME Feelings Charades
AGE 2 years+
OBJECTIVE Act out an emotion using only your hands and facial expressions and see if the other player(s) can guess it correctly.
HOW IT WORKS This game can be played one-on-one or with two teams. Once an emotion is chosen, act it out without making a sound. See if the other player(s) can guess what feeling you're demonstrating on the first try. Little ones might need pictures of emotions to choose from to get started.

"We often don't have time to get through a board game in one sitting, so we use binder clips to keep all the cards for each player together and clip them to the space where their playing piece goes. Then we put the playing piece in the handle, so there are no arguments when we pick it back up later."

—Christine Armer; Hillsboro, OR

Get the whole gang involved.

GAME Candy Slide
AGE 4 years+
OBJECTIVE Score the most points by sliding a mix of colored candies (such as M&M's, Skittles, and jelly beans) onto the same-colored ring of the bull's-eye.
HOW IT WORKS Draw a bull's-eye, and make each ring a different color that corresponds to the colors of your candy game pieces. Tape it to the center of a table so it's flush. Take turns sliding a colored piece of candy across the tabletop, trying to make it land in the same-colored ring of the bull's-eye. Add a point to each player's score for each piece that lands in a matching colored ring. Deduct a point for each candy that lands in a ring of another color. Winner eats all!

Parents' staff picks

After all, if Mom's not having fun, no one is.

- "Hedbandz is great fun for even the littlest kids because there is no reading—just guessing (like the game 20 Questions). My son gets a kick out of seeing my card and knowing I can't see it!"
—Emily Furlani, Art Director

- "We love Sorry! because no matter how far ahead one player is, the lead can change on a dime. This makes it a fun game for kids who are still learning how to lose gracefully since they are rarely creamed and for adults with a competitive streak (ahem)."
—Jenna Helwig, Food Editor

- "My husband and I only like to play games with our kids that are just as challenging for us. Ticket to Ride and Catan: Junior are our family favorites. Even my son who can't read yet can play—and can beat us all!"
—Chandra Turner, Executive Editor

WARDROBE STYLING BY SARAH CONROY. PROP STYLING BY PAM MORRIS. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY SUSAN DONOGHUE. CHILD WRANGLING BY SARAH BLASZCZAK. OPENING SPREAD, FROM LEFT, ON BOY: SHIRT, OLD NAVY. SWEATER, SPLENDID. PANTS, H&M. ON GIRL: SHIRT AND JEANS, OLD NAVY. VEST: MISHA AND PUFF. ON GIRL: SHIRT, ZUTANO. SWEATER, ZARA. JEANS, ANAIS & I. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT ON BOY: SWEATER, ZUTANO. ON MOM: SHIRT, H&M. GAMES: PETER ARDITO.



The stakes are high in this game, where candy is the lucky winner's prize.

Break out of your rut.

Bored with your classic board games? Try these instead.



If your family loves **Twister,** try **Twister Moves Hip Hop Spots.** Hop onto the flashing colored dots to rack up points in this active dance game that puts your fancy footwork—not flexibility—to the test. *8 years+, $25; hasbrotoyshop.com*



If your family loves **Connect 4,** try **Oversight.** In this game, bump certain columns or rows of playing pieces in any direction as you battle up to three other players to get four of your pieces in a row. *7 years+, $25; amazon.com*



If your family loves **Othello,** try **Crowded Waters.** Avoid becoming bait in this strategic game where players try to be the last shark to "swim" (place a game piece down) freely. *8 years+, $20; educationalinsights.com*



If your family loves **Trouble,** try **Trouble: Despicable Me Edition.** Pop the beloved bubble and be the first player to successfully move all of your colorful Minions around Gru's conveyor belt to win the game. *5 years+, $15; toysrus.com*



If your family loves **Chutes and Ladders,** try **Peanuts Surprise Slides.** Preschoolers can spin the dial to move their favorite characters through the board, with shortcuts and obstacles along the way. *3 years+, $10; walmart.com*

quirky quotes from kids

LEXI, 4 While exploring the kitchen drawers, my daughter held up something for me to identify. I told her it was a wine stopper, and she asked, "But, how does it stop me from whining?" **Sarah Shaw; Gilbert, AZ**

PAIGE, 6 I left my husband with a long honey-do list when I took my son and daughter to a birthday party. My son asked why Daddy wasn't coming, and my daughter explained, "It's because he's Cinderella today." **Ali Hatch; Savannah, GA**

JACKSON, 5 My son recently began kindergarten, and I asked him if he liked the P.E. class. He replied, "No! It's like watching you do workout videos in our living room ... except I have to do it!" **Jennifer Heath; Stephens City, VA**

KAYLEE, 2 My daughter picked up a book one day, then rolled her eyes, shook her head, and said, "Mommy, this book is so oppressive." **Nicole May; Irving, TX**

JAMESON, 4 One day my son kept staring at my forehead. After catching him a few times, I asked him what was the matter. He asked if I had ever broken my head. I responded no and asked why he thought that. He replied, "Because you have so many cracks on your forehead!" **Meghan Hurley; Walpole, MA**

HANNAH, 8 My oldest daughter asked what she could do for her baby brother, and I teasingly told her she could check his diaper. After peeking in the leg opening, she announced, "I can't tell if he went. All I can see are his tentacles!" **Shannon Manley; Sheppard Air Force Base, TX**

KIDS+LIFE CRAZY 8 DAYS A WEEK

crack us up & win!
Your funny story could appear on this page and you could win a $50 gift card from Crazy 8. Plus, you could also win the Parents Best of Bloopers grand prize—a $500 gift card from Crazy 8. Find out how to enter and see the abbreviated rules on page 80.

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Easy Winter Breakfast Warm Up

Kids love the cozy taste of Bays English Muffins made from an authentic family recipe. Try making French Toast Sticks for a special treat! Enjoy 4 varieties: Original, Sourdough, Multi-Grain & Honey Wheat. In your grocer's dairy case. **Bays.com**



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Stopain® Migraine provides fast relief of migraine pain. This safe & effective non-drowsy formula can be used at any stage of your migraine, up to 4 times a day. Try it with $4 off! Code: **PARENTS41** at **stopainmigraine.com** or 800-201-7246



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before your yoga instructor finds out about your not-so-namaste nacho lunch.
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you.

FIND YOUR HEALTHY, HAPPY MOM PLACE



DANIEL GABBAY/TRUNK ARCHIVE.

TLC for tired eyes The latest way to enliven your eyes is so easy, you can do it lying down. Eye masks (they look like patches) contain a pre-dispensed amount of ingredients designed to firm, hydrate, and brighten. We're fans of Boscia Sake Brightening Hydrogel Eye Masks ($15 for three pairs; boscia.com). Sure, you may still need some concealer, but piling it on will be a thing of the past.

small world

Itty-bitty beauty products are not only cute to look at, they also help you trim down (the clutter, that is).

by DEVON ABELMAN



1. Hands-On Help In four steps, Formula X The Hydrating Prescription delivers the cure for dry nails. *$19.50; formulax.com*

2. Big Payoff The Lipstick Queen Galactic Gorgeous lip-gloss set packs a hefty dose of color and shine. *$20 for four; spacenk.com*

3. Jet-Setter's Dream Pick a pod—any pod!—from Sephora Collection's Sleeping Mask Discovery Set for your next trip. *$20; sephora.com*

4. Perfect Blends The Clean Rollerball Layering Collection is made up of five mini vials, each with a unique scent; they can be worn alone or together. *$18 for five; sephora.com*

5. Eye Lift Marc Jacobs Beauty The Skyliner Petites Collection features seven stunning eyeliners. *$48; marcjacobs.com*

6. Instant Refreshment Fight odor on the fly with Mood Factory Mini Mood Deodorants. *$5 each; themoodfactory.com*

7. Slim Shady Slender as it is, the Smashbox Double Exposure Mini Palette holds eight eyeshadows. *$24; smashbox.com*

8. New Classic Fresh Sugar Lip Temptations have the same superior color and hydration you've come to expect from the popular brand, just in tinier tubes. *$35 for four; fresh.com*

RULERS: COURTESY OF POPPIN.COM.

photograph by **TRAVIS RATHBONE**

crock 'n' roll



chipotle beef & bean chili



chicken verde tortilla soup

apple cinnamon overnight oats

quinoa & lentil sloppy joes



Get all the fixin's for a tasty, slow-cooked meal on your next #targetrun. Find your family fave at target.com/recipes

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your perfect workout

Can't make it to the gym? By alternating short bursts of all-out exercise with less intense periods, you can achieve more. Try this high-intensity interval training (HIIT) plan by trainer Ramona Braganza four times a week and you'll feel firmer in a month.

by **SHAUN DREISBACH**

Cardio basics

Start with 30 seconds of light cardio, then choose any heart-pumping activity (such as jumping rope) for your three cardio bursts. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being no effort and 10 being as hard as you can go), you should be at an 8 or a 9.

photographs by **MARLEY KATE**

start here ↓

:90
Cardio burst



:60
Walking plank

Start in low plank position, forearms on floor. Place right hand under right shoulder, then left hand under left shoulder; straighten arms to push-up position (as shown). Lower to starting position and repeat, alternating starting hand each time.



Start with 3-lb. weights and work your way up.

:60
Reverse fly

Stand with feet apart, a dumbbell in each hand. Hinge forward so torso is almost parallel to ground, knees bent, arms extended toward the floor, palms facing each other. Lift arms out to sides at shoulder height (as shown); pause, then lower to the start. Repeat.



:60
Static squat

Stand with feet hip-width apart, holding one dumbbell in each hand, arms extended in front of you, palms facing in. From here, squat down, knees bent 90 degrees (as shown); hold this position until the minute is up.

:90
Cardio burst



:60
Pulsing lunge

Stand with feet apart, dumbbell in each hand. Press straight arms up toward ceiling. Step forward with left foot and lower into lunge (as shown). Pause, then straighten legs. Lower and straighten for 30 seconds, then switch sides for 30 more seconds.



:60
Mountain climber

Place hands shoulder-width apart on floor with feet in push-up position. Jump right foot forward, landing with ball of foot under right shoulder (as shown). Quickly switch sides, jumping left foot forward and right leg back. Continue, alternating legs.



:60
Wall flattener

Stand with back and heels against wall, feet together, knees slightly bent. Bend elbows 90 degrees in a goalpost position (as shown) and rest arms against the wall. Keeping elbows bent, slowly slide arms up the wall 4 or 5 inches, then lower back to the goalpost position and repeat.

:90
Cardio burst



:60
Bridge with knee lift

Lie on back with knees bent, feet flexed; arms by sides. Curl tailbone off floor and lift hips into the air; hold. Lift right foot off floor and bring knee in toward chest (as shown). Return foot to floor. Do five lifts, then switch for five lifts with left leg. Repeat.



:60
Side plank

Lie on left side with legs extended and hips stacked. Prop yourself up on left forearm. Lift hips off the ground as high as you can, extend right arm toward the ceiling, and hold for 30 seconds (as shown). Lower, switch sides, and hold for 30 seconds.



:60
Superman

Lie facedown on the floor, arms and legs extended. Slowly lift arms, chest, and legs; gaze at floor to prevent neck strain (as shown); pause, then lower to the starting position. repeat.

✱ And that's it! You can take a break now—you've earned it.

ON-SET TRAINER: AMANDA BUTLER. WARDROBE STYLING BY LAURA PRITCHARD. PROP STYLING BY CARLA GONZALEZ-HART. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY DINA CALABRO FOR BERNSTEIN & ANDRIULLI. OPPOSITE PAGE: SHIRT, ALO YOGA, AVAILABLE AT CARBON38. BRA, VICTORIA'S SECRET SPORT. PANTS, ADIDAS. THIS PAGE: SHIRT, MARA HOFFMAN ACTIVE, AVAILABLE AT CARBON38. SHOES, ADIDAS X STELLA McCARTNEY, AVAILABLE AT BANDIER.



are you winning at parenting?

The quiz with no wrong answers by **SARAH SCHMELLING**

1. How did you get that stain on your shirt?

a) Lunch projectile

b) Paintbrush-battle intervention

c) Bath crayon gone rogue

d) Any of the above

2. Why did you just walk into the kitchen?

a) To get coffee?

b) To make someone's lunch?

c) To get your hairbrush? It's as likely there as anywhere.

d) If you stand there long enough you'll remember.

3. What was that noise?

a) Rabid badgers. Or children.

b) What noise?

c) Two boys playing what they call "The Game of Ouch"

d) Oh, they'll be fine.

4. What's on today's schedule?

a) Girl Scouts, soccer, PTA planning meeting for Carnival Night, moms' night out

b) Figuring out how to get out of planning meeting for Carnival Night in order to get to moms' night out

c) Negotiating car pools to soccer and Scouts after remembering you're chair of the planning committee for Carnival Night

d) Wait. Carnival Night?

5. How do you and your spouse decide who's taking your child to the birthday party at the bouncy place?

a) You have a point system for determining a party's crazy-making potential and divide the share accordingly.

b) Thumb-wrestling tournament

c) The parent who goes to the bouncy place is excused from taking children to get dental work and haircuts.

d) You go. You love bouncy places!

6. Who started it?

a) He did.

b) She did.

c) You did?

d) You don't know. You were in the kitchen. For some reason.

ANSWER KEY

If you answered these questions on a chaise longue while your kids whipped you up a fabulous dinner after cleaning the house…
Congratulations! You win at parenting. Now don't tell anyone.

If you answered while sitting in the front row at a school performance…
You sure can multitask! But it's time to put the quiz down and hold your iPad up in the air and record your kid so the parent behind you can't see the show.

If you answered while being tied to a chair by your children because you're their pirate prisoner…
At least you have a good excuse for not going to the bouncy place!

If you said you love the bouncy place…
You are not a parent. You somehow found this quiz and saw that question and thought, "Hey! I like places. I like bouncing." But liking the bouncy place means you like a humid facility that smells like sauerkraut, and where you are rewarded in the end with a goody bag full of inflatable hammers and an immediate head cold. The love for the bouncy place is the number-one thing separating kids from grown-ups today. So put the quiz down now, you impostor.

If you took this quiz while home with a head cold after a party at the bouncy place…
We're so sorry. Now find coffee and get to work. Next year's Carnival Night isn't going to plan itself.

TONY GARCIA/GETTY IMAGES.



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DADS TAKE

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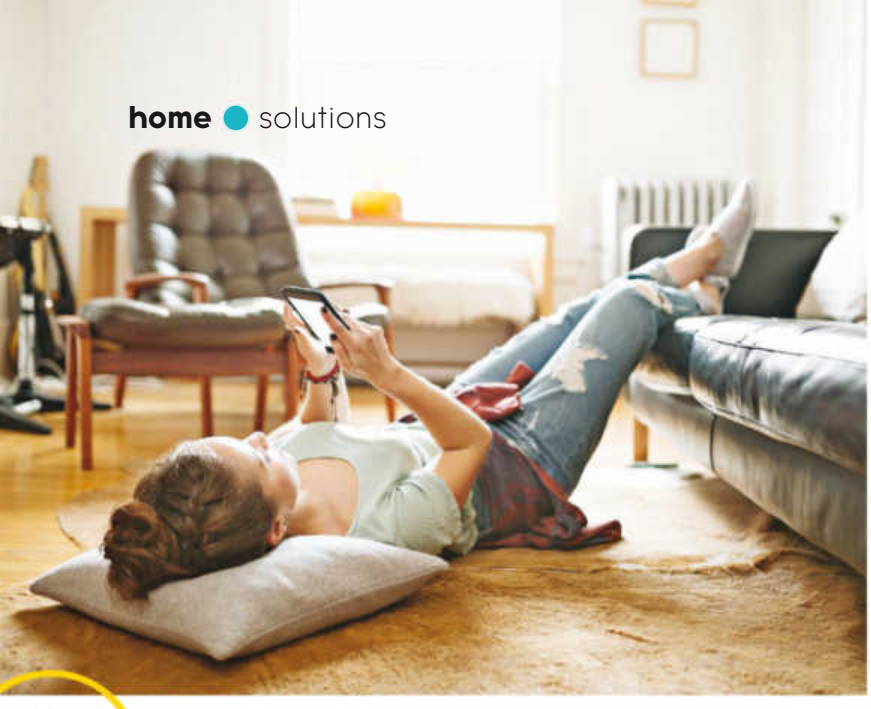
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TARA DONNE.

hack your home Want to make your household run more efficiently in 2016? We've got you covered with clever DIY tricks and the latest gadgets, including some that do your chores for you—no joke! by **HOLLY CORBETT**



Automate Your Chores

You'll be even happier to hang out at home when you don't have to tackle such a long list of to-dos!



1 Let your plants water themselves. You don't need a green thumb with this self-watering planter. Just fill the Boskke Cube's outer reservoir with H2O to keep greenery hydrated for up to a month. *$25; momastore.org*

HACK IT! Place one end of a thick piece of yarn into a glass of water so it touches the bottom; put the other end 3 inches deep into your plant's soil to "moisture wick" whenever you can't water regularly.

2 Don't touch that trash. The Bruno SmartCan opens with the wave of a hand and has a built-in vacuum at its base to automatically suck up any dirt that's swept in front of it. *$200; brunosmartcan.com; preorder for February delivery*

HACK IT! Handy with a drill? Put two holes in the side of your plastic garbage can to release air pressure so it's easier to lift the bag.



The SmartCan even reminds you when it's trash day!



3 Skip emergency store runs. Press the Amazon Dash Button to automatically reorder basics via Prime. You'll get a text alert so you can easily cancel if you change your mind. *$5; amazon.com*

74% of readers are interested in smart home technology, according to a *Parents* survey.

a smarter home

The Internet of Things is expanding to everything—your coffeemaker, fridge, even your lightbulbs. Check out these cool products that make it happen.

APPLE'S HOMEKIT
Siri wants to become a part of your family. With HomeKit, you can use your iPhone or iPad to integrate smart devices—such as Philips Hue lights—and then give Siri commands for any of these gadgets in your home. *HomeKit is on devices running iOS 8.1 and above; prices for accessories vary*

IRIS BY LOWE'S HOME AUTOMATION PACK
This platform also allows you to control devices from an app. It comes with two contact sensors that alert you when doors are opening or closing, a smart outlet plug that allows you to control any device that's plugged into it, and more. *$129; lowes.com*

GOOGLE'S ONHUB
This smart router uses the Google On app to make setting up and troubleshooting your Wi-Fi easy. You can also prioritize faster Wi-Fi to a device if, say, your son's movie streaming is interfering with your photo uploading. Over time, it will be able to talk to the growing number of smart devices. *$200; store.google.com*



HAMMER: JEFFREY WESTBROOK. GIRL: HERO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES. PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS.

Get It Done Faster

These ideas and products can add up to big-time savings so you can do more of the stuff you really enjoy—unless scrubbing the tub was on your happy list.



1 Try a speedy fur fix. Rubber agitators on the Evercare Fur Erase Extreme Stick loosen pet hair so you can pick it up two times faster than with a standard lint roller. *$3 to $6; major retailers*

HACK IT! No lint roller handy? Run a damp rubber glove over your clothes to quickly collect pet hair and fuzz.



2 Slash kitchen prep. T-fal's 10-in-1 Rice & Multi-Cooker, which, besides having settings for slow cooking and for rice, features every option from browning to steaming to baking so you don't need to do multiple steps. It also lets you cook risotto without having to stir. *$100; bedbathandbeyond.com*

HACK IT! Once a Month Meals gives you a grocery list and recipes to make a bunch of freezable meals in just one day. Customized menus include gluten-free. *$10 a month or $99 a year; onceamonthmeals.com*

3 Streamline your get-dressed routine. Hey, you do it for your kids: Every Sunday night, set out five outfits, one for each weekday, in your closet (complete with necklaces, scarves, socks, and hosiery) so you can just grab and go.

4 Hang kids' art in only 3 minutes or less. GoodHangups are removable and also reusable magnet stickers that turn walls, doors, glass, and even brick into an instant magnetic board that lets you display your artwork without using a hammer or a frame. *$15 for an eight-pack; goodhangups.com*





HACK IT! Hanging pictures the old-fashioned way? Glue a round magnet to the bottom of your hammer to corral your nails. Then use a comb to hold a nail in place while you're hammering it.

5 Keep vacuuming from sucking up time. No more going over (and over!) the same spot: The new super-lightweight and rechargeable Dyson V6 Motorhead cordless vacuum lets you speedily buzz around your home and comes out on top of other upright models for pickup performance on both hard floors and carpets. *$400; amazon.com*



Cut Costs

Save some greenbacks with these frugal tips, and try putting those savings toward something your whole clan can enjoy (start planning your 2016 family vacation now!).



1 Dry clothes faster. These adorable Hedgehog Dryer Buddies speed up drying time by creating space for heat to move more easily and nix the need for dryer sheets. *$8; kikkerland.com*

HACK IT! Toss in two tennis balls wrapped in tinfoil to get the same speedier-drying and static-control benefits, advises Stacey Plaisance, of the blog *I'm a Lazy Mom*.

2 Make produce last. The average family of four wastes up to $2,275 of food annually, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. Extend the life of your veggies with OXO GreenSaver Produce Keeper's carbon filters. They absorb ethylene gas (which ripens produce faster). *Starting at $15 each; oxo.com*

HACK IT! Keep a sliced apple from turning brown by using a rubber band to hold it together, making it easy to toss it into a lunch box.





3 Save on electricity. The iDevices Switch (a plug that goes into an existing outlet) connects you to plugged-in small appliances via an app on your iPhone or iPad to see which ones are sucking the most energy. Then simply set them to switch off to lower your bill. *$49; Lowe's*

HACK IT! Pull the plug on "vampire power" (the juice wasted even when plugged-in electronics are off) by using a "smart" power strip to stop power when items are not in use.

4 Turn kids' clothes into cash. The online consignment store ThredUp.com makes it easy to sell your children's gently worn clothing and then use any credit earned for their new wardrobe. Order a free Clean Out Bag; once you receive it you can mail in your pieces at no cost for evaluation.

gadgets you didn't know you needed



See and talk to your pet from anywhere with the Petzi Treat Cam: Wi-Fi Pet Camera & Treat Dispenser. Use the Petzi app on your phone or tablet to dispense treats when you've left Fido at home. It even takes Instagram-worthy photos of him. *$170; amazon.com*



The BeON Home Protection System starter kit has Bluetooth-compatible LED bulbs that screw into existing sockets and that you can control via an app. They store energy, so you'll have lights during an outage, and have microphones that listen for smoke alarms, in case you need light during an emergency. *$199; beonhome.com*



Free yourself from multiple power cords with Nordmärke wireless charging pads. Place one on an existing piece of furniture to turn it into a wireless charging station. *Prices start at $28 each; ikea.com*

APPLE: JEFFREY WESTBROOK. PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS.

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5 easy meals

Supper is solved! With only one grocery trip and a bit of prep, your weeknights will now go a lot more smoothly. by **LARAINE PERRI**

MONDAY

Steak With Farro

Active Time **20 minutes**
Total Time **25 minutes**
Makes **4 servings**

INGREDIENTS

- **2 Tbs. olive oil, divided**
- **8 oz. broccolini, trimmed and cut into 2-in. pieces**
- **Weekend-prepped marinated steak**
- **4 tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- **½ tsp. sugar**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **1½ cups weekend-prepped farro**
- **½ cup thinly sliced red onion**
- **2 Tbs. shaved Parmesan cheese**

MAKE IT

1. In a nonstick grill pan, heat 1 tsp. oil over medium-high heat. Add broccolini. Cook for 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from pan. Add 2 tsp. oil to pan. Add steak. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side.

2. Whisk together 1 Tbs. oil, lemon juice, sugar, and salt. Warm farro; stir in the broccolini, dressing, and onion. Slice steak crosswise; reserve a third for Wednesday. Serve farro with steak. Top with Parmesan.

NUTRITION PER SERVING 473 calories; 30g protein; 25g fat (8g sat. fat); 30g carbs; 4g fiber; 5g sugar; 3mg iron; 98mg calcium; 494mg sodium

grocery list

- 4 5-oz. center-cut salmon fillets
- 1½ lbs. skirt steak
- 1 4-oz. pkg. pancetta
- 1 8-oz. block Parmesan cheese
- 4 oz. shredded pepper jack cheese
- 1 12-oz. pkg. jasmine rice
- 12 oz. semi-pearled farro
- 1 jar oyster sauce
- 1 bottle sesame oil
- 1 32-oz. box low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans
- 1 15-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 4 8-in. flour tortillas
- 1 lb. broccolini
- 3 6-oz. pkgs. baby spinach
- 1 10-oz. bag shredded carrots
- 1 large red sweet pepper
- 1 small bunch fresh cilantro
- Fresh rosemary
- 2 medium yellow onions
- 1 large red onion
- 1 head garlic
- 2 lemons
- 1 jar sesame seeds

Pantry items Olive oil, balsamic vinegar, honey, sugar, salt, pepper, cornstarch, eggs, reduced-sodium soy sauce, nonstick cooking spray

weekend prep

1. Trim steak; cut crosswise into thirds. In a large zip-top bag, combine 3 Tbs. soy sauce, 2 Tbs. olive oil, 1 Tbs. each balsamic vinegar and honey, and 2 crushed garlic cloves. Add steak; seal bag and turn to coat. Refrigerate.

2. Prepare 1¼ cups farro and 1⅔ cups jasmine rice according to package directions. Let cool and store separately in the fridge.

FOOD STYLING BY SIMON ANDREWS. PROP STYLING BY PAIGE HICKS.

photographs by **KANA OKADA**



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tip!
Serve these hearty quesadillas with lime wedges and sour cream.

TUESDAY

Sesame Salmon

Active Time **20 minutes**
Total Time **25 minutes**
Makes **4 servings**

INGREDIENTS

- **Nonstick cooking spray**
- **3 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce**
- **2 Tbs. honey**
- **2 tsp. lemon juice**
- **¾ tsp. cornstarch**
- **4 5-oz. center-cut salmon fillets**
- **1 tsp. sesame oil**
- **2 6-oz. pkg. baby spinach**
- **2 cups weekend-prepped rice**
- **¼ tsp. sesame seeds, toasted**

MAKE IT

1. Preheat broiler to high. Line a baking sheet with foil; coat with cooking spray. In a small saucepan combine soy sauce, honey, and lemon juice for glaze; bring to a boil. In a small bowl combine cornstarch with 1 tsp. water; stir into glaze. Cook, stirring, until thick, about 1 minute. Place salmon on baking sheet; broil 10 minutes. Brush with half of the glaze. Broil 2 minutes more.

2. While the salmon is cooking, heat sesame oil in a large skillet. Add spinach; cook until just wilted. Microwave rice to warm. Drizzle salmon with remaining glaze, sprinkle with sesame seeds, and serve with spinach and rice.

NUTRITION PER SERVING 386 calories; 33g protein; 10g fat (2g sat. fat); 38g carbs; 2g fiber; 10g sugar; 5mg iron; 98mg calcium; 541mg sodium

WEDNESDAY

Steak Fajita Quesadillas

Active Time **15 minutes**
Total Time **20 minutes**
Makes **4 servings**

INGREDIENTS

- **1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. olive oil**
- **1 large red sweet pepper, cored and cut into strips**
- **1 cup sliced red onion**
- **Grilled and sliced steak left over from Monday**
- **4 8-in. flour tortillas**
- **4 oz. shredded pepper jack cheese (1 cup)**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro**

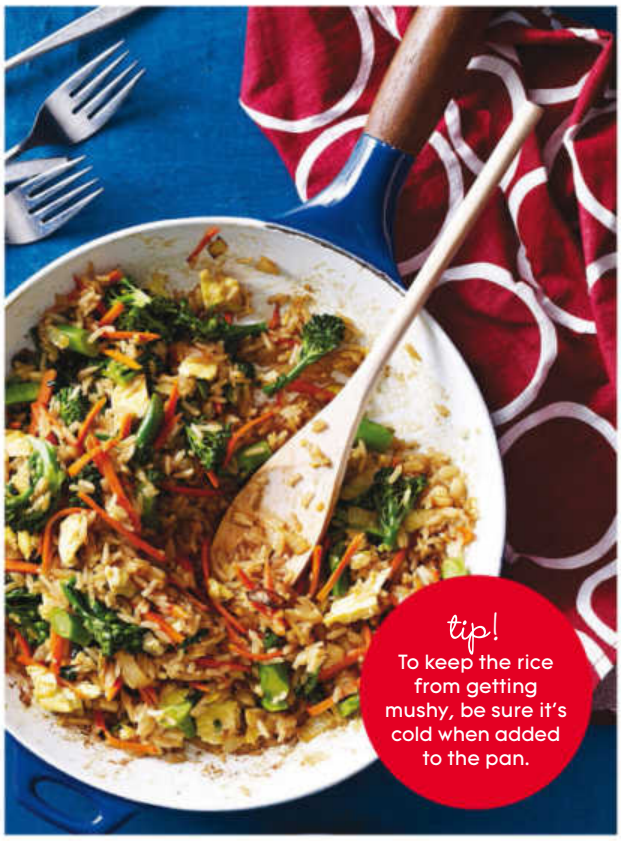
1. In a large nonstick skillet heat 1 Tbs. oil over medium-high heat. Add the pepper and onion. Cook, stirring often, about 4 minutes. Add the steak; cook 2 minutes.

2. Divide the cheese evenly over half of each tortilla. Divide steak mixture evenly over cheese. Top with cilantro. Fold tortillas.

3. Heat 1 tsp. oil in the same skillet over medium heat. Add two quesadillas; cook 2 minutes, or until golden. Flip; cook 1 minute more. Repeat with the remaining 1 tsp. oil and quesadillas.

NUTRITION PER SERVING 470 calories; 23g protein; 27g fat (9g sat. fat); 34g carbs; 1g fiber; 4g sugar; 3mg iron; 271mg calcium; 788mg sodium


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THURSDAY

Veggie Fried Rice

Active Time **25 minutes**
Total Time **25 minutes**
Makes **4 servings**

INGREDIENTS

- **2 Tbs. oyster sauce**
- **2 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce**
- **½ tsp. sugar**
- **2 tsp. sesame oil, divided**
- **3 large eggs**
- **8 oz. broccolini, cut into 1-in. pieces**
- **2 Tbs. olive oil**
- **1 medium onion, finely chopped**
- **3 cups weekend-prepped rice**
- **¾ cup shredded carrots**

MAKE IT

1. In a small bowl combine the oyster sauce, soy sauce, and sugar; set aside. In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 tsp. sesame oil over medium-high heat. Add the eggs, and cook until softly scrambled. Transfer to a plate; break into small pieces.

2. Add 1 tsp. sesame oil and the broccolini to the pan; cook 1 minute. Add ⅓ cup water, cover, and steam until just tender, about 2 minutes. Transfer the broccolini to a plate. Add 2 Tbs. olive oil and onion to the pan; cook 1 minute. Add the rice and carrots; cook 2 minutes. Stir in the broccolini, egg, and sauce. Cook 2 minutes more.

NUTRITION PER SERVING 342 calories; 10g protein; 13g fat (2g sat. fat); 46g carbs; 2g fiber; 4g sugar; 3mg iron; 58mg calcium; 575mg sodium

FRIDAY

Tuscan Farro Soup

Active Time **15 minutes**
Total Time **25 minutes**
Makes **4 servings**

INGREDIENTS

- **2 tsp. olive oil**
- **3 oz. pancetta, diced**
- **1 medium onion, finely chopped**
- **4 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary**
- **1 32-oz. box low-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained**
- **1 15-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes (undrained)**
- **1½ cups weekend-prepped farro**
- **1 6-oz. pkg. baby spinach**
- **⅓ cup shaved Parmesan cheese**

MAKE IT

1. In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add pancetta. Cook until golden, about 4 minutes. Add the onion; cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and rosemary; cook 30 seconds.

2. Stir in the broth, beans, tomatoes, and farro. Bring to a boil; simmer 10 minutes. Stir in the spinach until just wilted; add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into bowls; top with Parmesan.

NUTRITION PER SERVING 357 calories; 20g protein; 11g fat (4g sat. fat); 44g carbs; 9g fiber; 4g sugar; 4mg iron; 243mg calcium; 691mg sodium

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GfK, 2014

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Should you pay by credit or debit card?

Most of us face this question on a daily basis and don't give it much thought. But you should. Alan Henry, Lifehacker.com deputy editor and technology expert, says credit cards are the clear winner. They offer greater security for online shopping. If you're unsatisfied with a product or suspect fraud, issuers do a better job than your bank in investigating sellers and retracting payments. Many credit cards also include an extended warranty on electronics purchases. If you're traveling overseas, they provide lower currency-exchange fees. And many offer valuable points, rewards, or cash-back options. The one caveat: "Never take out more credit than you can handle," warns Henry. If you're prone to racking up sizable bills that you can't pay off, stay out of debt by using your bank card, which won't let you spend more than you have in your account.

illustrations by **LUCI GUTIÉRREZ**



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3 SIMPLE STEPS
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1 GET
Vaccinated Yearly

The first and most important way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine for yourself and your family. Almost everyone six months and older should get vaccinated, especially those with chronic health conditions.

2 STOP
the Spread of Germs

Encourage everyday healthy habits, such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and washing hands often.

3 TALK
to Your Doctor

If you think you or a member of your family may have the flu, contact your doctor promptly. Anti-viral drugs (available only by prescription) can lessen symptoms and prevent serious complications, like pneumonia.

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Should you stay with cable or ditch it?

With cable bills skyrocketing (the average family now pays $123 per month) and ever more alternatives emerging, the smart move for many is to cut the cord, points out Suzanne Kantra, founder and editor of Techlicious.com, a consumer-electronics advice site. If your favorite shows are on local TV, consider a digital antenna, which allows you to pick up free signals in your area; try the Antennas Direct Micron-R ClearStream Indoor UHF DTV ($60 at amazon.com). To add a variety of content on demand—from basic cable and network shows to original programs—you can add Hulu (starts at $8 a month), Netflix streaming (starts at $10 a month), iTunes ($1 and up per episode), and/or Amazon Prime ($99 per year). These services let you customize what you view through a computer, streaming video box (like Amazon Fire TV Stick, $40, or Roku, starts at $50), or gaming system (like Xbox One, $350). Sling Television (starts at $20 per month) and PlayStation Vue (starts at $50 per month and available through PlayStation consoles) enable you to watch "live" TV, movies, and sports without a cable or satellite subscription. HBO Now ($15 per month) lets you stream all of the network's content to the box or digital or mobile device of your choice, including first-run *Sesame Street* episodes. Showtime has a similar service ($11 per month, or $9 with Hulu). Sports nuts can subscribe to MLB TV (starts at $130 per year), NBA League Pass (starts at $120 per season), or NHL GameCenter (starts at $105 per season). Football fans will need NFL Sunday Ticket ($42 per month for DirecTV subscribers and $50 per month for the streaming



service). Note that when you quit cable, you'll still need a broadband Internet connection, which costs $20 or more per month—so factor that into how much you're really saving.

Should you save for retirement or college first?

As a parent it's hard to imagine saddling your kids with enormous debt—even a public university education is projected to cost close to $100,000 by the time your baby is ready to leave the nest. Still, this adage bears repeating: Your child can take out loans for school; you can't do the same for retirement. So put yourself first for a change. Aim to sock away 15 percent of your income in a tax-deferred 401(k) plan at work or an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or a Roth IRA, advises Gary Belsky, coauthor of *Why Smart People Make Big Money Mistakes and How to Correct Them.* Any free funds remaining can go into a 529 college savings plan. Set up automatic 529 deductions from your paycheck or checking account, and ask your parents and in-laws to contribute too. Every little bit you invest now will help make higher education for your child a reality.

Should you buy a house or keep renting?

Home ownership has long been the American dream, but with the fast-rising real-estate prices of recent years, it's become a stretch for many young families. Online calculators at msn.com/money and trulia.com let you plug in your finances and weigh the options. But they can't make this crucial life decision for you. If you plan to live in your home for at least five years (generally considered the break-even point), can manage a down payment of 20 percent, and possess sufficient funds to cover the maintenance and utility costs that come with home ownership, go for it, says Jane Hodges, author of *Rent vs. Own.* If you meet only some of these criteria, talk with a financial planner to determine whether you're better off renting—and working to bolster your savings—before taking the next step.

Should you set up an emergency fund or focus on paying off your debt?

It's crucial to have money set aside in case you or your partner loses a job or you're faced with unexpected expenses (like a major dental bill or a new hot-water heater). But it's also important not to fall deeper into debt. Determining which of these to address first depends on the type of obligations you have, says Stephany Kirkpatrick, vice president of financial advice for LearnVest.com.

If saving the recommended three to six months' worth of your net salary in an emergency fund seems impossible, shoot for one month—and keep making minimum payments. Then chisel away at any card balances you have. "Credit cards are dangerous because the rates are high and the interest grows daily," says Kirkpatrick. Once you've paid them off, fully fund your emergency account. When that's done, switch your attention to paying off lower-interest car and student loans. That may sound like a lot, but it's a blueprint that will help secure your family's financial future.

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ADVICE AS YOUR CHILD GROWS



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BABY 0–12 months

cold comfort

If your little one is sick, follow this guide to help her feel better.

by JENNIFER RAINEY MARQUEZ

OF ALL THE milestones your baby will encounter in her first year, few will be as heartbreaking as her first cold. She might pant during feedings, snort herself awake during a nap, or look at you, bewildered, as if to say, "What is happening to me?" You'll want to do anything you can to make her feel better. While over-the-counter meds aren't an option at this age—they're neither safe nor effective, experts say—that doesn't mean you can't make your baby more comfortable when she's feeling under the weather.

Clear out the mucus.

For the first six months, babies tend to breathe through their nose, so congestion can hit them hard, says Mike Patrick, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics at Nationwide Children's Hospital, in Columbus, Ohio. The standard blue-bulb syringe can be too big for the tiniest nostrils, so try the smaller green version that's marketed as an ear syringe. After inserting it into your baby's nostril, tilt the tip down slightly so it's more perpendicular to his face, and gently push it in as far as it can go. "You'll be surprised how much mucus you can get out," says Dr. Patrick. For more power, use saltwater nose drops or spray to loosen the congestion. You can buy some at the drugstore, or make your own every day by mixing a quarter teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of water, boiling it for ten minutes, and then cooling it to room temperature.

Keep her hydrated.

Just like adults, babies sometimes don't feel like eating when they're sick, but you should still encourage your baby to nurse or take a bottle as often as possible, says Charla Tabet, infant-development specialist at La Rabida Children's Hospital, in Chicago. If she won't drink milk, consult with your doctor to make sure she doesn't become dehydrated—and ask if it's okay to offer her an electrolyte solution, such as Pedialyte. Feeding your baby in an upright position can also help ease congestion and prevent mucus from running down her throat while she's trying to drink.

Help him cough it out.

"Babies don't have the muscle strength to cough effectively, so it can be tough for them to clear phlegm," says Stan Spinner, M.D., chief medical officer of Texas Children's Pediatrics in Houston. One way to help: Take your baby into the bathroom and turn on the shower to make the air hot and steamy. "It will get his nose running, loosen the mucus in his throat, and make his coughs more productive," says Dr. Spinner. Try doing it before bed, since mucus tends to drain into his throat and chest while he's lying down.

A humidifier set up in the baby's bedroom can also help ease congestion, Dr. Spinner says. Be sure to keep it out of your baby's reach, and fill it with fresh water every day so it doesn't get moldy.

✱ Encourage your baby to nurse or take a bottle as often as possible.

Encourage rest.

Your baby needs more sleep when she's sick, but all those annoying symptoms can make a decent snooze difficult. For a not-very-mobile baby, raising the head of her crib might help (but keep in mind that once she can roll around, she might end up head down and feet up).

If a fever is making her too cranky to sleep, it's safe to give her infant acetaminophen between ages 2 and 6 months, and either infant acetaminophen or ibuprofen after 6 months. (Just make sure you carefully measure the dosage according to your baby's weight, not her age.) If she's younger than 2 months, consult your doctor before giving her medication. A comforting bedtime routine—such as playing music or taking a bath together—can go a long way toward encouraging her to nod off too.

Watch for warning signs.

If your baby seems to be getting worse, it may be time to contact your pediatrician. For infants up to 3 months, any fever over 100.4°F is a "call your doctor right away" scenario, says William Varley, M.D., community pediatrician with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. For older babies, look out for a fever that lasts more than three days or that develops a few days after the onset of cold symptoms.

Other signs to watch for include wheezing or rapid, strained breathing, which may indicate a virus or pneumonia. If your baby develops coughing fits, it may be whooping cough. Don't hesitate to reach out to your doctor with concerns.


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TODDLER 1–2 years

speed up, slowpoke!

Kids this age take their sweet time doing almost everything. How to move them along

by **TAMEKIA REECE**

GETTING dressed, eating, taking a bath, climbing into his car seat—your toddler's daily activities seem to be executed in excruciatingly slow motion. Of course, his tendency to draw out events and to linger whenever he spots an interesting item isn't meant to annoy you. Toddlers are both very curious creatures and easily distracted, so when an object captures their attention, they often forget about everything else, says family physician Deborah Gilboa, M.D., author of *Get the Behavior You Want ... Without Being the Parent You Hate!* Kids this age also lack a sense of time and thus feel no urgency to speed up so Mommy isn't late for work. If the slow going is driving you nuts, try these dawdler-defeating strategies.

Map it out.

Sometimes toddlers get diverted because they find it difficult to follow (or remember) your directions. To make it easier, break them down, suggests Rallie McAllister, M.D., coauthor of *The Mommy M.D. Guide to the Toddler Years*. If you want your child to fetch his shoes, make your request simple yet explicit: "Tommy, please walk to the door ... now pick up your shoes. Great! Can you bring them to Mommy?" Another idea: Take photos of your child completing each morning task (eating breakfast, brushing his teeth, getting dressed) and then paste them onto a poster board à la a child-care teacher. Having everything lined up chronologically will make the daily routine seem simple and fun, which may help put more pep in his step.

Minimize distractions.

If the TV is on in the background or a toy beckons from across the room, your toddler is more likely to lose interest in what she's doing. When you want her to focus on dinner, turn off electronic devices and hide potential attention-grabbers. You can also keep your child on task by making her an active participant in the process. Asking, "Do you want to eat your green beans or your meat first?" makes her feel like she has some say in the matter—and encourages her to cooperate rather than delay, points out Dr. McAllister.

Ease into transitions.

Toddlers often have trouble shifting from one activity to the next because they tend to be lost in the moment, says Tovah P. Klein, Ph.D., author of *How Toddlers Thrive*. To smooth transitions, give your child advance notice of what's coming next. Since he won't understand what "ten minutes left" means, try, "Soon it will be bathtime. We'll read one more book. When it's done, we'll go to the tub." You might point out the pluses of an upcoming activity to get him excited ("You're going to have so much fun on the swings at the park!") to inspire him to move faster.

Reward timeliness.

When your child gets ready for bed quickly or lets you reach your destination without any detours, try making a big deal about it ("You did such a great job walking without stopping that we made it to the restaurant on time—yay!"). Praising a positive behavior increases the likelihood that she'll repeat it the next time. Small incentives can also have a big impact. When it's time to get ready for day care, say, "If you're dressed by the time my phone beeps, you can choose a puzzle for us to do later, or we can have a mini dance party," suggests Dr. Gilboa. Earned rewards teach your child that being efficient creates opportunities to do activities she enjoys.

Pick up the pace (gently).

Sometimes you can't wait for your child to get moving. You might be running late for a meeting or have a family emergency. In such instances, it's important to keep your cool. "When you rush, your toddler picks up on your tension, and your urgent commands may cause him to freeze up completely," says Dr. McAllister. Instead of pressuring your child to "hurry up," get down at his eye level and explain the situation: "I know you're very excited about this dirt pile, sweetie, but we need to leave. Let's take a picture of it, and we can talk about it later." Then scoop him up if necessary and go.

* When your child gets ready for bed quickly or lets you reach your destination without any detours, make a big deal about it to encourage him.

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PRESCHOOLER 3-4 years

problem behaviors

Even "good kids" need to break bad habits.

by **HEATHER GOWEN WALSH**

YOU MIGHT cringe if your child's teacher tells you that he hit another kid with a block or spit on someone, but take heart. "It's normal for a well-behaved 3- or 4-year-old to act unacceptably—even aggressively—at school," says Rebecca Dingfelder, Ph.D., a child psychologist in Durham, North Carolina. "They are trying to grasp how to get along in a group setting, and it often takes a lot of trial and error to figure that out." In addition, children this age are constantly watching their peers. If they see one child get away with something, they want to try it too. Learn to recognize common preschool misbehaviors and help the teacher nip them in the bud.

Acting Out

Preschoolers get frustrated easily, and they still haven't perfected using their words to express their emotions. So they're apt to lash out by throwing things, hitting, kicking, or even biting when they're upset. Your child's teacher probably dealt with the situation immediately and gave her time to cool down. However, many parents make the mistake of going home and punishing their child for what happened at school, says Dr. Dingfelder. "Preschoolers—especially 3-year-olds—don't have a strong long-term memory. If your child hits someone in the morning, she's probably forgotten it by the afternoon, and giving her a consequence will only confuse her." Instead, talk generally about what is acceptable behavior ("Use your words if you're upset") and what is a no-no ("You should never bite anyone").

If you see these behaviors at home, react quickly and consistently. Firmly tell your child, "No, we don't throw things at people," and then put her in time-out in a quiet room.

Oral Fixation

Kids lick—or spit at—other children out of curiosity, to be silly, or because they saw another classmate do it. "If the teacher tells you this happened, say to your child in a low-key, matter-of-fact way, 'Spitting is not good manners and it spreads germs,'" suggests *Parents* advisor Eileen Kennedy-Moore, Ph.D., author of *What About Me? 12 Ways to Get Your Parents' Attention (Without Hitting Your Sister)*. A preschooler who's accustomed to using his mouth to explore his environment may eat dried Play-Doh or glue. But if it happens repeatedly, it may be your kid's way of getting a reaction from his teacher or from other students.

Speak to your child's teacher about removing him from class if he tries to put something gross in his mouth, so he doesn't get the attention he craves. Also, in the morning, remind him, "Only food goes in your mouth." If he continues to eat weird stuff, talk with your pediatrician. In rare instances, this can be a sign of a severe iron deficiency or even pica, an eating disorder in which a child develops an appetite for abnormal substances.

Getting Physical

Preschoolers often hug and squeeze each other too hard. "Kids are exuberant and love to embrace their friends—but they often don't realize their own strength or that they are making another child uncomfortable," says Dr. Kennedy-Moore. Talk to your child about personal space and tell her that it's okay to hug parents and siblings but friends should get a less-touchy greeting. Then come up with an alternate behavior, such as fist-bumping or waving hello. This is another opportunity to teach her about feelings and other people's perspective. Dr. Kennedy-Moore suggests that you explain, "Madeline doesn't like tight squeezes. It makes her uncomfortable. She'd be happier if you greet her with a high five."

Being Disrespectful

When it seems like your kid was rude, he probably wasn't intending to be insulting. He was most likely repeating a snarky or inappropriate phrase he picked up from TV—or you. "My husband and I had an inside joke that he'd call me 'Woman' when he wanted something. One day I got a call from my son's teacher that at snacktime he'd told her, 'Woman, get me a napkin!'" says Dr. Dingfelder. She explained to her son how things that are funny at home may not be appropriate at school.

If your child does say or do something offensive—such as calling the teacher a name—talk with him about what language is appropriate in the classroom. Then help him write a note of apology, Dr. Kennedy-Moore suggests. "Have your child draw a picture with a note from you saying that he is sorry." As you talk more with your child about his behavior and set clear expectations, he'll be less likely to slip up in school and you'll have fewer of those calls from the teacher.



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SCHOOL-AGE 4–5 years

clothes call

When your kid is ready to dress herself, be prepared to play fashion police. by MARISA COHEN

FOR THE FIRST few years of my daughter Molly's life, I treated her as my personal dress-up doll, so it was a shock when she suddenly started expressing strong opinions about style when she was 5. Her new insistence on choosing her clothes (miniskirts every day) was often adorable but also frustrating on mornings when I was running late and my little fashionista had a meltdown because she didn't like her snow boots anymore.

I soon realized that this form of self-expression was just a normal part of Molly growing up. "Kids this age can't—and shouldn't—make decisions about their school or bedtime, but they can choose what outfit they want to wear, as long as it's within reason," says Susan Engel, Ph.D., a child-development expert at Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Since there's often a fine line between encouraging your child's creativity and letting her go to her aunt's wedding in flip-flops and a crop top, this is how to strike the right balance.

Understand his choices.

Children, like adults, use style to create an image they want to present to the world. For many kids, choosing what to wear helps them define where they fit into the social order at school, says Robin Goldstein, Ph.D., author of *The Parenting Bible*. "They're looking around and seeing what the other kids are wearing. Having the same light-up sneakers or zip-up hoodie is one way for him to connect with his peer group." Instead of choosing clothing that suits your taste, let him be part of the shopping process, Dr. Goldstein suggests. "When you're at the store ask, 'Do you like this jacket?' before making a purchase."

Create some standards.

If your kid wants to wear a plaid shirt with flower-print pants, she probably won't be the only one in her class flouting the rules of fashion. Insisting that she wear the dress you picked out is probably not worth the morning struggle, says Dr. Goldstein. However, you should enforce two rules: The outfit must be appropriate for the weather, and appropriate for her age. You can also explain that certain occasions have dress-up exceptions that everyone, including mommies, must follow. To foster wise outfit selections, you might sort her clothes in different drawers or bins, with labels such as "school," "play," and "dressy," suggests Dr. Goldstein. Then let her choose whatever she wants from the proper bin. If that still doesn't speed up the morning routine, it's best to select two outfits the night before and let her pick her favorite.

Respect the comfort zone.

Many kids aren't worried about looking good—they just want to wear clothes that feel good. "As you get older, you may be willing to put up with a stiff fabric or an annoying tag if you think a particular shirt is cool," Dr. Engel says. "But at 5 or 6, most kids don't care about anything other than their own comfort." Take the necessary steps to inspect for poking labels, harsh zippers, or scratching pockets before you offer your child a new item to try on. Then have him approve the feel before you cut off the store tags. If you find a pair of pants or a sweatshirt that your child decides to live in, buy it in a few colors.

Let it go.

When your child comes to breakfast and proudly says, "Look, Mommy, stripes with stripes—I match!" let her bask in the satisfaction of having put together her amazing outfit all by herself. "It's no big deal for kids to make some fashion missteps," says Dr. Engel, who points out that her own son wore orange sweatpants with a tiger tail to school every day for a year and lived to tell the tale. "If your child wears a wacky outfit and someone teases her about it, that's an important learning moment," she adds. "Does she want to change to fit in or learn to be happy in her own distinctive style?"

rules

PARENTS BEST OF BLOOPERS CONTEST, PAGE 42

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the most embarrassing thing my kid has ever done was ...

"I was a single mom, and my 3-year-old asked, 'Is that my daddy?!' when an attractive man walked behind us in the grocery store." —**Kellie Souza Lorenzen**

"When my son asked everyone at a party to 'blow me.' He wanted them to blow bubbles at him." —**Teresa Hart**

"Ripped my shirt down while I was having a face-to-face convo with the dentist." —**Heather Marie Murphy**

"Pooped in my neighbors' driveway, in broad daylight!" —**Denise Guthrie**

"My son asked a family friend when she was having her baby. She's not pregnant, and she said she's starting her diet now." —**Andy Pandel Smol**

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